

## **REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

According to the Office Action, Claims 9-14 are objected to for being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In response, independent claims 1 and 5 are amended to include the elements specified in allowable dependent claims 9 and 12, respectively. Accordingly, claims 1 and 5 should now be allowable. Claims 9 and 12 are therefore cancelled.

Allowable claims 10, 11, 13, and 14 have been rewritten as new independent claims 15, 19, 23 and 27. Accordingly, claims 15, 19, 23 and 27 should be allowable. Dependent claims 10, 11, 13, and 14 are therefore cancelled.

In addition, claims 16-18 depending on independent claim 15 are added and should likewise be allowable. Claims 20-22 depending on independent claim 19 are added and should likewise be allowable. Claims 24-26 depending on independent claim 23 are added and should likewise be allowable. And, claims 28-30 depending on independent claim 27 are added and should likewise be allowable.

According to the Office Action, Claims 1-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) for allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,693,876 (Ghitea, Jr.) in view of U.S. Patent 6,289,332 (Menig). In view of the above amendment, this rejection is now rendered moot.


In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, allowance of claims 1-8 and 15-30 is respectfully requested.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, please charge any such fee or any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayment of fees to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket 080437.49289US).

Respectfully submitted,

CROWELL & MORING LLP

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By   
GEORGE L. FOUNTAIN  
Reg. No. 36,374  
Tel.: (949) 263-8400 (Pacific Coast)

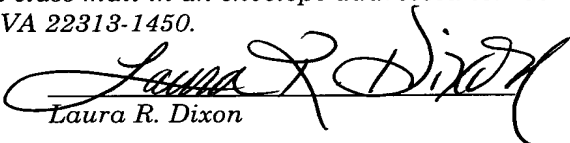
Crowell & Moring LLP  
Intellectual Property Group  
P.O. Box 14300  
Washington, D.C. 20004-2595

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**CERTIFICATE OF MAILING/TRANSMISSION (37 CFR 1.8A)**

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Laura R. Dixon